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Joseph Kraft

# Changing the President's Men

As the Carter administration nears the end of its second year, Washington is alive with rumors of heads about to roll. Not without reason.

Experience has reshaped the president's concept of government. To bring practice into harmony with his revised views, changes need to be made in the president's office and at the Cabinet and subcabinet levels.

Carter came to Washington with the horrors of the Nixon-Haldeman White House fresh in his mind. To ensure against secret, unaccountable and illegal rule by the insiders, he insisted on two principles.

First, he vested in the department and agency heads maximum authority, especially in the matter of picking their own staffs. Second, he put together a lean White House staff, short on the capacity to coordinate issues that engaged the interest of several departments.

That approach has, predictably, failed in several respects. The administration has been notable for a lack of high-level coordination. On the political side, the president has already shaken up the White House. Jerry Rafshoon and Anne Wexler have been added to the staff with visibly good results.

But the current drive to impose tight budgetary constraints on the departments and agencies has disclosed weakness at the top of the Office of Management and Budget. If he is truly serious about holding down inflation, the president will want a weightier figure at the head of OMB than the present director, James McIntyre.

Relations between the National Security Council staff under Zbigniew Brzezinski and the Departments of State and Defense are currently being studied at OMB. Presumably there will emerge some curb on the NSC's itch for advocacy as against coordination of differing departmental views. Perhaps Brzezinski will even be obliged to put high on his staff somebody with competence to blend economic and energy questions into security issues.

Several Cabinet officers get very high grades for instinctive responsiveness to the needs of the White House. Included in that list are Secretaries Cyrus Vance of State, Harold Brown of Defense, Cecil Andrus of Interior and Bob Bergland of Agriculture.

Several others—including Michael Blumenthal at Treasury, Joseph Califano at HEW and Patricia Harris at HUD—have shown more independence. But events have tended to move

issue of supporting the dollar. Califano and Harris, apart from being able, have support from liberal and black constituencies the White House would not readily antagonize at this time.

In some cases there is a tension between individual qualities and institutional requirements. Attorney General Griffin Bell has superb political instincts, but he seems not to like Washington or the Justice Department all that much. Moreover, the need for an attorney general without personal political ties to the president is now underlined by the case of Bert Lance, the president's friend and former director of OMB, who is the focus of an Atlanta investigation that has already seen the president's brother, Billy, take the Fifth Amendment.

James Schlesinger—and I say this as a friend and admirer—is more noted for rugged intellectual honesty and critical acumen than the political agility needed to bring warring agencies into a new department at a time when energy is a hot, partisan issue. Juanita Kreps lacks the pushiness to bring the Department of Commerce to the fore in the matter of coordinating trade and investment policies.

Ray Marshall at Labor may not have the stature to bargain effectively with the likes of George Meany of the AFL-CIO and Frank Fitzsimmons of the Teamsters. Stansfield Turner, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, seems to think the problems of the agency are matters of image rather than—as is the case—performance.

At the subcabinet level, the administration would like to get more managerial ability. The post of undersecretary of agriculture is vacant, and Sidney Harman is leaving the No. 2 job in Commerce—under his own steam and not, as asserted by some White House aides, under pressure. Apparently pressure is being put on Undersecretary of Labor Bob Brown, Deputy Secretary of Transportation Alan Butchman and Undersecretary of Interior James Joseph.

On the whole, the administration will probably err on the side of making too few rather than too many changes. Certainly there is no need to caution against surgery.

But the tone is important—especially at a time when government in general is under fire. It would be a sign that the Georgia mafia had grown up to their jobs if they could achieve the necessary firing with something like the graciousness Carter himself shows in his per-